

REMINISCENCES OF THE LONG JOURNEY FROM ENGLAND TO "THE VALLEY" IN THE SIXTIES

Written for the Deseret News January 3, 1920 by Robert Aveson,
of Salt Lake City, Utah.

"And it shall come to pass in the Last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. " - Isaiah 2: 2-3

No doubt the pioneers of early days who gaze on the above engraving will be reminded of reminiscences, when they traveled by ox team from the frontier to these valleys of the mountains.

It will also bring to their memories the happy hours spent around the camp fires, when they sang spiritual and sentimental songs and chatted of by-gone days and future hopes; how, in troublesome times, they watched, with eager eyes, for Indian attacks; and through the night listened with keen ears to the howling of wild animals.

Recently I conversed with some of the pioneers who came to Utah in the early sixties, in regard to their experiences while crossing the plains. In my research I found one interesting but sad story. My informant belonged to the same conference, and resided not many miles away from the family referred to in my story; also sailed on the same ship, traveled with them by rail to the frontier, and was assigned to the same wagon crossing the plains.

STORY OF THE DAVIS FAMILY

In the year 1864, in the county of Wiltshire, there resided an honest, industrious man, named William Davis and his faithful wife. Their family consisted of four children - two boys and two girls. Brother Davis and wife were staunch members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and through their frugal savings procured sufficient means to emigrate to the frontier from where the Saints crossed the plains. The time for them to leave drew near, so they sold their furniture and prepared for their journey to Utah. Just before leaving they were invited to spend a day or two with relatives, a few miles from their home. They had secured berths on the sailing vessel "Hudson", which was to sail the latter part of May of that year. While on their visit word came from headquarters of the Mission at Liverpool that the date of sailing of the ship "Hudson" was postponed a few days later. This made their visit longer. The change of date seemed somewhat unfortunate, although it might have been for the best. Their youngest child was taken sick, and the afternoon before their departure, the child died. This was somewhat perplexing, as they could not remain for the funeral and be in time for departure of the ship.

"We must stay and see our child buried," said the loving mother.

"I should very much like to do so," said the bereaved father, "but it is hardly possible. We have secured our berths on the vessel, and the ship will not wait for us. We will arrange with our relatives for the child's burial."

That evening they completed, as best they could, the funeral arrangements. And you can judge how little sleep the parents had that night.

Next morning they were up early. The mother was heart-broken; the father was very sad, and the other children were full of grief. The time was right at hand when they had to say farewell to the dead babe and their relatives. With tears in her eyes, Sister Davis knelt down by the side of the remains of her beloved child and kissed its little cheeks and hands.

REMINISCENCE VOICES OF THE LONG JOURNEY FROM ENGLAND TO THE VALLEY
IN THE SIXTIES
Written for the Great Plains January 2, 1920 by Robert Averson,
of Salt Lake City, Utah.

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established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations
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And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of God of
Isaac; and he will feed us of his way, and we will walk in his paths. Isiah 2:2-3

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in regard to their experiences while crossing the plains. In my research I found one
interesting but sad story. My informant belonged to the same conference, and resided not
many miles away from the family related to in my story; also sailed on the same ship,
traveled with them by rail to the frontier, and was assigned to the same wagon crossing the
plains.

STORY OF THE DAVIS FAMILY

In the year 1844, in the county of Wiltshire, there resided an honest, industrious man,
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and two girls. Brother Davis and wife were staunch members of the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints, and through their frugal savings procured sufficient means to emigrate to
the frontier from where the Saints crossed the plains. The time for them to leave drew near,
so they sold their furniture and procured for their journey to Utah. Just before leaving they
were invited to spend a day or two with relatives, a few miles from their home. They had
secured berths on the sailing vessel "Hudson", which was to sail the latter part of May of that
year. While on their visit word came from headquarters of the Mission at Liverpool that the
date of sailing of the ship "Hudson" was postponed a few days later. This made their visit
shorter. The chance of date seemed somewhat unfortunate, although it might have been for
the best. Their youngest child was taken sick, and the afternoon before their departure
the child died. This was somewhat startling, as they could not remain for the funeral and
be in time for departure of the ship.

We must stay and see our child buried, said the loving mother.
I should very much like to do so, said the paternal father, but it is hardly possible.
We have secured our berths on the vessel, and the ship will not wait for us. We will arrange
with our relatives for the child's burial.

That evening they contemplated, as best they could, the funeral arrangements. And you
can judge how little sleep the parents had that night.

Next morning they were up early. The mother was heart broken; the father was very
sad, and the other children were full of grief. The time was tight of hand when they had
to say farewell to the dead babe and their relatives. With tears in her eyes, Sister Davis
knelt down by the side of the remains of her beloved child and kissed its little cheeks and
hands.

While writing this part of my story I am reminded of a very affecting spiritual song in our Sunday School song book, Two verses of which are as follows:

"Jesus my Savior true,
Guide me to thee.
Help me thy will do do,
Guide me to thee.
When in the darkest night,
As in the morning bright
Be thou my beacon light,
Guide me to thee.

"When silent death draws near,
Guide me to thee.
Calm thou my trembling fear,
Guide me to thee.
Let me thy mercy prove,
Let thy enduring love
Guide me to heaven above,
Guide me to thee.

As the time was drawing near for their departure on the train, Brother Davis leaned down to his wife, kissed her and said, "Come, my dear girl, this is a hard trial, but we must go. We have done all we can for the dear little child."

They gave a parting kiss to the babe, bid good-bye to their relatives and started for the railway station.

After a voyage of six weeks and four days, they landed safely in New York, July 19, 1864, and then proceeded on their journey by rail, reaching the village of Wyoming -- the frontier, August 2nd of that year. Nothing of importance transpired on their journey so far. They were just beginning to recover from their feelings of sadness through the loss of their dear child, when, after traveling on the plains for a few weeks, another sad affliction came in their pathway.

DEATH BY THE WAYSIDE

The immigrants were subject to different kinds of sickness, such as mountain fever, cholera, dysentery, etc. Comforts in those days on long journeys were very few, luxuries were hardly thought of. When sickness came, they could not run to a doctor or to a drug store. It required great faith for even the hardy and strong to pass through prairie life hardships. The bread was cooked in a bake skillet on a fire made of "buffalo chips", brush and limbs of trees. Such was camp life. There were many sore trials and troubles on the way.

Poor William Davis. Serious illness overtook his partner in life - an attack of dysentery, which only lasted a few days. The trial was hard when parting from their little child, but it was a sore trial indeed to see his beloved wife in the throes of death. He did all that was possible to aid and assist in her dying condition. Some of the sisters from nearby camp wagons volunteered their service, but she was too weak, too far gone for human aid.

What made matters worse, his youngest boy was also sick with the same disease, and the father little thought he was so seriously ill. The boy was laid down in another part of the wagon, and in a faint voice whispered as loud as he could, "Daddy, Daddy."

The grief-stricken father went to his assistance and leaning over to him, said, "What do you want, Benny?" Whispering in his father's ear, he said, "I want some soup, daddy." "Lay still, my boy for a little while, and daddy will bring you some." Brother Davis then turned his attention to his sick wife, who, in a low toned voice, said to him, "I feel I am going to leave you, William; take care of the children". "Oh, Nell, don't talk like that, what can I do without you? Let me pray with you." He breathed a prayer to his Heavenly Father to spare her life, if only for the sake of her children. At the close of his prayer, he

? Elizabeth
Hoyse

While writing this part of my story I am reminded of a very affecting spiritual song in our Sunday School song book. Two verses of which are as follows:

Issue my loving true,
Guide me to thee.
Help me, I will do so,
Guide me to thee.
When in the darkest night,
As in the morning light,
Be thou my lantern light,
Guide me to thee.

Let my life's path always lead,
Guide me to thee.
Let my heart be ever true,
Guide me to thee.
Let my love be ever true,
Guide me to thee.
Let my life be ever true,
Guide me to thee.

As the time was drawing near for their departure on the train, William Davis looked down to his wife, kissed her and said, "Good-bye, my dear girl, this is a hard trial, but we must go. We have done all we can for this little child."

They gave a parting kiss to the baby, and good-bye to their relatives and started for the railway station.

For a voyage of six weeks and four days, they landed safely in New York, July 19, 1884, and then proceeded on their journey to the village of Wyoming -- the frontier about 100 miles from New York. The first of the journey was a long and weary one. They were just beginning to recover from their feelings of grief through the loss of their dear child, when they travelled on the plains for a few weeks, another sad affliction came in their pathway.

DEATH IN THE WYOMING

The frontiers were afflicted with a kind of sickness, and an unusual fever, cholera, dysentery, etc. Comfortable and long journeys were very few, luxuries were hardly thought of. When sickness came, there could not be a doctor or a drug store. It required great faith for even the hardy and strong to pass through such a life. The frontiers were peopled in a hasty manner on a few hands of "bad old men," men and kind of men. Such was common life. There were many a sad and sad trouble on the way.

For William Davis, serious illness overtook his partner in life -- an attack of dysentery, which only lasted a few days. The trial was hard when parting from their little child, but it was a sore trial indeed to see a beloved wife in the throes of death. He did all that was possible to aid and assist in her dying condition. Some of the other men nearby came without volunteered their service, but it was a week, too far away for them to aid.

What made matters worse, his youngest boy was also sick with the same disease, and the father thought he was as a result ill. The boy was laid down in another part of the wagon, and in a faint voice whispered to his mother as he could, "Daddy, Daddy."

The first-aid man that came to his assistance and leaning over to him, said, "What do you want, father?" "Distention in his belly," he said, "I want something, please." "Still, my boy for a little while, and daddy will bring you some." "But father, I feel I am nearly as bad as you, William, take care of the children." "Well, don't talk like that, going to leave you, William, take care of the children." "Well, don't talk like that, you can't do without me, but we are with you." He finished a prayer in his heart, he felt as if he were near his father. At the close of his prayer, he

turned toward his beloved wife - she was breathing her last breath. It was an awfully sad scene. William was broken hearted; his other two children were present, the tears rolling down their cheeks.

"We have traveled long together,
Hand in hand and heart in heart,
Both through fair and stormy weather,
And 'tis hard, 'tis hard to part."

We can imagine the feelings of a loving parent bereft of a faithful partner through life; far, far away on prairie land, a long distance from village or town.

That night William was so bewildered and confused through the death of his wife, that he almost forgot his darling sick boy. But just as daylight appeared next morning, he lit a fire and made some soup. And taking it to him, he said; "Here Benny is your soup." It was too late - too late; the child was in the throes of death. "Oh Benny, Benny," said the broken hearted father, "Speak to me once more. Call me Daddy." There was no answer, the little spirit had fled. This was a double bereavement. Almost overcome with grief, William bowed his head down and exclaimed, "What have I done that such awful trials should befall me?" Some of the campers gathered around and tried to console him. On such occasions, however, words of sympathy are comforting but inadequate to appease the grief-stricken.

DOUBLE GRAVE ON THE PLAINS

Preparations were made for the burial of wife and child. They were laid side by side in one grave. The funeral service was very brief - no music, no flowers, no coffin; the bodies were wrapped in a sheet and covered with a blanket. It was an affecting scene - many eyes were wet, yes, even the eyes of stout hearts were bedimmed with tears.

My story is not yet completed. It was said that half the world is not aware what trials and tribulations the other half has to endure. Some days elapsed before Brother Davis began to feel in his normal condition. His two remaining children clung to him and they could have been observed marching along ahead of the train - the boy on one side of the father, the girl on the other, hand in hand.

They arrived in Great Salt Lake City the latter part of October of that year (1864), and it is supposed that they went to Provo. Brother Davis was glad to be in Zion. Figuratively speaking, he enjoyed "smooth sailing," but it was only for a brief period. Not many months passed ere he was called to endure another severe trial - his boy was accidentally drowned. The only remaining child - a girl - grew up to womanhood and was married.

What became of William? My informant was unable to learn of his whereabouts for the past half century. It is probable he again married and had a family for the last heard of him he was trying to find another partner through life.

"Though deep'ning trials throng your way,
Press on, press on, ye Saints of God,
Ere long the resurrection day
Will spread its light and truth abroad."

MARY ANN DAVIS MOULTON SMITH, wife of William D. Moulton.

Her father, William Davis, was born in Wiltshire, England, January 2, 1830.
Was a citizen of Heber, Utah, and died in Heber, Utah, on May 7, 1891.

Her mother was Elizabeth Hope, born in Wiltshire, England, about 1834.
Was a citizen of England and died in Nebraska on August 13, 1864.

My father, William Davis, came directly to the Hailstone Ranch now called Elkhorn in this county, where he lived practically all his life after coming to Utah, and acted as presiding Elder in that District for a number of years. He was a Veteran of the Black Hawk Indian War and did service at that time. The family had to move to Heber for protection at that time. He took up a land claim near the Hailstone Ranch and was quite successful as a farmer and stock raiser and built him a comfortable home on the Ranch. Later he bought a nice home in Heber where he died. His first wife having died on the plains he married Mary Goddard Collins about April 10, 1865, by whom he raised a family of six children. They started from the Hailstone Ranch to walk to Salt Lake City to get married in the Endowment House but were overtaken by teams on the way to Conference and invited to ride. They came back and settled down on the ranch where they entertained many of the Heber people going and coming from Salt Lake City, for many years.

William Davis was noted for his kind hearted hospitality to all comers.

Mary Goddard Collins, my stepmother came to Utah the same year my father did.
Her husband John Collins died on the way coming to Utah near Fort Bridger.

She made my father an excellent wife and was a very kind mother to myself and brother who had been left without a mother's care.

Signed, Mary Ann Davis Moulton Smith.

Above is a copy of application for membership to the Society of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

Also, "William Davis and Mary Goddard Collins Davis were good kind hospitable people, strictly honest, peaceable, lawabiding citizens of the State of Utah and were well respected by all their neighbors.

Names of children by first marriage to Wm. D. Moulton.

William Davis Moulton	born October 16, 1874
Moroni Davis Moulton	born July 26, 1876
Thomas D. Moulton	born January 27, 1878
Elizabeth Moulton	born April 28, 1879
Hyrum Moulton	born February 10, 1881

By second husband George Smith.

Olive Elsie Smith	born May 10, 1891
Blanch Louise Smith	born September 11, 1892
Luella Smith	born March 17, 1894
Earl H. Smith	born May 18, 1896.

MARY ANN DAVIS (DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM D. MOUTON).

Her father, WILLIAM DAVIS, was born in Wiltshire, England, August 2, 1830.
Was a citizen of Idaho, died in Idaho, March 7, 1891.

Her mother was ELIZABETH MOORE, born in Wiltshire, England, about 1834.
Was a citizen of England and died in Idaho on August 10, 1894.

At birth, William Davis, came directly to the United States and lived in this country, where he lived practically all his life after coming to Idaho, and died as a citizen of Idaho in that State for a number of years. He was a member of the Black Hawk Indian War and did service of that time. The family had to move to Idaho for protection at that time. He took up a land claim near the Blackfoot land and was quite successful as a farmer and stock raiser and built him a comfortable home on the ranch. Later he bought a home in Idaho where he lived. His first wife, having died on the plains he married her second, Elizabeth, about April 10, 1857, by which he raised a family of six children. They started from the Salt Lake City to go to the Blackfoot land and in the endowment house but were overtaken by illness on the way to Conference and invited to stay. They came and settled down on the ranch where they were entertained and the Hebrew people being and coming from Salt Lake City for many years.

William Davis was noted for his kind hearted hospitality to all comers.

Her husband John Collins died on the way coming to Utah near Fort Bridger.
Her mother, Mary, was stepmother came to Utah the same year my father did.

She made my father an excellent wife and was a very kind mother to myself and brother who had been left without a mother's care.

Signed: Mary Ann Davis Mouton Smith.

Above is a copy of application for membership in the Society of the Descendants of Utah Pioneers.

Also, WILLIAM DAVIS and MARY, Elizabeth Collins Davis were good kind, capable people, entirely honest, respectable, law-abiding citizens of a State of Idaho and were well respected by all their neighbors.

Names of children by first marriage to Mary D. Mouton.

William Davis Mouton	born October 17, 1874
Mary Davis Mouton	born July 24, 1875
Thomas D. Mouton	born January 27, 1876
Elizabeth Mouton	born April 22, 1877
William Mouton	born February 10, 1881

By second husband George Smith.

Olive Elsie Smith	born Jan. 18, 1881
Blanche Louise Smith	born September 11, 1882
Luella Smith	born March 17, 1884
Edith H. Smith	born Nov. 12, 1887